/95 cont./

584 brothers in the girl's family. After entering the door and a brief
[782] rest, the ceremony of sticking incense before the ancestral tablet of the girl's family begins. The groom kowtows three times. If he is not present, his father kowtows in his place. If the groom is present he must also kowtow to his future father-in-law, mother-in-law, and other elders. If the girl's family
[556] is wealthy, then a pig will be killed to entertain the guests from the groom's family. The guests remain in the girl's family
574 for three days, during which the immediate relative of the
584 girl's family take turns in entertaining them with meals, called "meals from door to door." The closest relatives must enter-
[264] tain the visitors at breakfast, because breakfast is considered the most important meal in the Miao countryside. For instance, say there are six families, A, B, C, D, E, and F, with A and C being the closest relatives. Dinner on the first evening is given by the host family. /96/ breakfast on the second day is given by family A, lunch by family E, and dinner by family B. On the third day breakfast is given by family C, lunch by family F, and dinner by family D. When the guests are seen off on the fourth day, breakfast is given by the host family. As a
[264] rule three meals are served in a day, but when there are a large number of /clan/ brothers there are five or six meals in one day.
583 After breakfast on the fourth day the guests depart. Return
584 presents from the girl's family consist of a suit of clothes, a pair of shoes, and a hat for the future son-in-law, a piece of material for a pair of trousers for each guest, a pair of shoes each for the parents of the groom, and a pig's leg for the go-between.

585 A few months or half a year before the marriage the go-
787 between visits the girl's family to ask for the date and time
777 of her birth. He must bring with him two or four strings of cash
584 and some sweetmeats. This ceremony is called "asking for the lucky birth date." The girl's birth date and time thus obtained are matched with those of the groom in order to pick an auspicious day for the wedding. The date is communicated to
583 the girl's family through the go-between. They then begin to

/97 cont./

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782
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[776]

I am invoking the benignant spirits of union
To this mundane world.
The mission is none other than
To officiate at this marriage rite.
We ask the Heaven Uniting Spirit,
The Earth Uniting Spirit,
The Year Uniting Spirit,
The Day Uniting Spirit,
The Hour Uniting Spirit,
The twelve uniting spirits and twelve uniting fairies,
Tung Wang Kung /Lord of the East, leader of the male immortals/
Hsi Wang Mu /Lady of the West, " " " female immortals/
[821] The Cowherd and the Weaving Girl /names of stars/
And the Old Immortal in the moon."

585 At this point he takes a cup of wine and a piece of meat,
[788] and writes out an incantation. After burning this he asks the
groom to drink half of the wine and to eat half of the meat,
[264] the rest being for the bride when she comes in. These are called
[756] the uniting wine and the uniting meat. After the sorcerer priest has finished this performance, he sets off firecrackers and leads the bride into the house through a small side door. She sits down beside the fire pit, in which a huge fire has been started. The chair is placed slightly farther away for fear that the fire would give out too much heat. The chair cannot be pushed
[777] backward; it can only be pulled forward. The movement backward is recognized to be inauspicious; the forward movement then is auspicious. The sitting direction must be facing inside or in the direction of the ancestral tablet. After being seated she first washes her face with water. It has been boiled in a
[824] cooking pot with t'ung grass, pa-lun grass, and huang-mao grass, taken out and put in a basin, and incantations written
[756] and recited. While the bride is washing her face, the sorcerer priest sweeps with a broom several times behind her. After washing, she eats the meat and drinks the wine left by the groom.

/129 cont./

*782 Although the routine sacrifice is not held for any particular reason, its object is nevertheless the avoidance of calamities and the seeking of blessings. The "Sacrifice to the Ancestors" and "Eating Pigs" of the Miao religion and the "Local Divinity [177] of the Soil" and the "Flying Mountain" ceremonies of the guest religion are all for the purpose of beseeching the kuei not to make trouble and seeking their protection. The special sacrifices for the avoidance of calamities may be divided into [755] four categories: (1) for seeking a cure upon suffering illness; [783] (2) for seeking cleansing after seeing a supernatural phenomenon [777] or after any unlucky matter; (3) for seeking the resolution of a conflict that has arisen; (4) for seeking pardon for sins after [783] death. Those sacrifices for the invocation of blessings may be [556] divided into two categories: (1) to ask for wealth; (2) to ask [842] for children. But there are many ceremonies which on one hand are to avoid calamities, and /130/ at the same time are also ones which seek blessings. "Bludgeoning the Ox" of the [755] Miao religion can be performed both for the cure of sickness [842] and can also be performed to ask for children. "Redeeming a [177] Vow to the No" of the guest religion may be performed for the cure of illness or to ask for wealth or children, or can be performed for all of these .

Among the 16 ceremonies of sacrifice to the kuei of the Miao religion that we were able to investigate, the "Sacrifice" [755] to the "Ancestors" and "Eating Pigs" are routine sacrifices; "Ta Chia Hsien," "Redeeming the Soul," "Sacrifice to the Kuei of Pimples," and "Bludgeoning the Ox" are for seeking cures for sickness; the "Ta Kan Lo," "Sending Away the Supernatural Forces of the Old Tree," "washing the cat," and "washing the house" are for seeking cleansing after seeing a strange [783] phenomenon or something unlucky; "Eating Blood" is for seek- [777] ing resolution of a conflict that has arisen; and "Releasing the Soul of the Dead from Suffering" is for asking forgiveness of a dead person's sins. All the above, except for "Bludgeoning the Ox," which asks for a son at the same time, are ceremonies [842] performed for the avoidance of calamities.

769 /131 cont./
[787] down, one looking up) indicates nothing is going to happen. At the same time he utters the following incantation:

769 "The five bowls of meat and the five bowls of wine as
*782 well as all the pa-pa in the winnowing basket are all offered to the ancestors, and we beg you to eat!"

At this point the host burns the paper money to send off the kuei, and the sorcerer-priest continues the incantation:

"You have now eaten up the wine and meat. Now we are burning paper money for you! Before being burned it is paper but after being burned it becomes money. Divide it equally among you. Please go back and be good kuei and do not think of coming among mortals. In this world, in the morning and night when we eat our meals, we shall call you. When called, then please come. If, in your spirit /yin/ world, you know of our calamities, please do your best to help us."

[787] On finishing the incantation he divines for a second time with the chiao-tzu, and when he gets the yin chiao, then the performance is considered finished. While performing the sacrifice to the ancestors, the sorcerer-priest remains seated from beginning to end. When the ancestral sacrifice is performed because of a death
● [777] in the family, then a basin of water is used, in which all members of the family must wash their hands in order to remove bad luck. The wine, meat, and the pa-pa for the sacrifice are eaten by the family and the sorcerer-priest. Whatever remains is given to the sorcerer-priest to take back with him.

(2) Eating Pigs

*782 "Eating pigs" is called [kueŋ mbaʌ] in the Miao language,
[769] which means the "kuei" of pigs." It is the great sacrificial cere-
[776] mony of the Miao, which honors the grandparents and the house kuei
[796] as well as the thunder kuei. From beginning to end it is performed for four days and is divided into 14 parts. For this occasion four pigs are prepared beforehand as well as a number of chin of water-buffalo meat. The beef is cooked, and cut into slices, which are

/137 cont./
*782 tray is put beside the entrance. The incantation, uttered by the sorcerer-priest sends off the kuei.

(3) Ta Chia Hsien

755 *782 When a Miao becomes ill and taking medicine does not make him better, then he must make a vow to "ta chia hsien"/lit. "beat the family ancestors"/, which in the Miao language is called [pəŋ¹ mbəu¹ ɕioŋ¹], which means "beating Miao pigs." It may be performed during the illness or after the recovery. Before the event takes place, the host must serve notice to members of the [602] mother's brother's family, inviting them to send seven members of the maternal uncle's family (six men and a woman) to be guests. If that family does not have so many people, the maternal uncle may ask other people to make up the number. But the persons invited should not have the same surname as the host. No day needs to be selected as lucky, but the following days must be •[777] avoided: if a child is born in the family, it is necessary to wait one month before the ceremony is performed; the birth of kittens also necessitates one month's separation; the birth of pigs, goats, cows, horses, and dogs causes a postponement of 12 days; the hatching of chicks, ducklings, and goslings, three days; a funeral in the family or when the head of the family has witnessed a funeral of another family, 12 days. If the notice should arrive before the time of expiration of any of the above periods, the maternal uncle's family may refuse such an invitation. If the host because he seeks an immediate recovery from a sickness cannot wait any longer, he may invite other guests, but they may not have the same surname as he.

/138/ The Ta Chia Hsien ceremony is divided into four parts, requiring a whole day from morning till night. There [776] are altogether eight kuei invited: [nəŋ¹ mɛʌ tsoŋ¹ teŋ¹], nəŋ¹ mɛʌ bu¹ ɲieŋ¹], tsoŋ¹ teŋ¹ tsoŋ¹ ɲieŋ¹], [bu¹ ɲieŋ¹ tsei¹ mɛʌ], (it is said that these four are the ordinary names for the kuei of

/141 cont./

*782 [787] [777] incense and paper are burned. They watch the stance of the animal to divine good and bad luck. If the water buffalo, on entering the house, lifts his feet to advance, with its head facing the incense censer, and glances at the ancestral shrine, then it portends good luck. If the water buffalo is stubborn and refuses to move forward or even tries to back out as if frightened, then it portends bad luck. After the water buffalo has been bought, a Miao sorcerer is asked to come to the house to present the ox to the kuei, and also to beseech the kuei. After this presentation, the family has to wait for the first frost after the autumn harvest to make the sacrifice. When the date is decided it is never changed or postponed.

*782 602 [203] After the autumn harvest has been completed and the first frost has arrived, an auspicious day is chosen to sacrifice to the kuei. Half a month before, four paternal male cousins are asked to go separately to where the relatives live to notify them. The most important relatives are the families of the host's mother's brother and the wife's maternal uncle, who are said to be the "leg-bearing relatives." They are so-called because after sacrificing to the kuei, one leg of the buffalo is given to the maternal uncle's relatives. A buffalo is divided into four legs. The first belongs to the /host's/ mother's brother, the second to the wife's maternal uncle, and the third and fourth are sent to other close relatives. The "leg-bearing relatives on receiving the notification [203] presents the messenger with a strip of red cloth as an expression of gratitude. Moreover, within the 12 days before the sacri- *782 fice, one must avoid seeing unclean things, such as a dead cat, [783] a dead dog, or a dead person. If this avoidance is violated, then [784] the person may not be in the company of the buffalo kuei. The "leg-bearing" relatives often go together with the clan brothers /of the host/, making up a number of at least ten or more men up to as many as 60 or 70. Also invited are musicians, trumpeteers /?/, and drummers, to go in formation. Wealthy families [55] imitate the old customs of the former Manchu dynasty, displaying official [177] insignia, playing fine music, and beating gongs and carrying parasols. The maternal uncle's family entitled to the first leg

/157 cont./

*782 his head and a long robe, and rides a horse. The women accom-
[292] panying him must be gaily dressed, and no pregnant woman is
[843] allowed to go along. The men assisting beat drums and blow musical instruments and set off firecrackers. Led by a sorcerer-priest the procession stops at the intersection of three crossroads about three or four li from the village. The sorcerer-priest then shouts for the dragon, whereupon music and firecrackers once more make a great din, and the procession turns back. When they arrive outside the village, the host and the male members of the family, each carrying incense and paper, are led from the house by another sorcerer-priest to greet them. After the welcome the two sorcerers enter in a dialogue. The male members of the host's family and the maternal uncle salute each other three times. The sorcerer-priests
[788] ring hand bells and lead the people into the house, and drums and music and firecrackers burst out in a great din. The maternal uncle and the other relatives return to their respective homes. After that a small hole is dug in the ground in the main house, in which is put a bowl of cinnabar water, which is covered by a stone slab. Upon the slab is a large rock, shaped like an egg. This is called the "dragon chamber." The sorcerer-priest rings the hand bell and utters an incantation, and the members of the host's family, men and women, go around the small hole three times, while music and firecrackers rend the air, after which the hole is filled with earth, with only the top of the dragon chamber exposed as a distinguishing mark.

(15) Warming the Ox Muzzle

*782 Warming the Ox Muzzle is also called "Sacrifice to the
● 777 Black Emperor Earth Lord," in the Miao language [ʈiɨ˧ ɸiɔ˧ ba˨
731 lon˨ ɲie˨]. When the Miao meet with disaster or financial loss,
[776] they sacrifice to this kuei. The names of the kuei are [mp'ɑ˧ tʂuɪ˧ liɔ˧ tʊɤ˧] and [ɲi˧ tsuɪ˧ liɔ˧ ntɕ'iɣ]. The time of this ceremony is during the day and the place is by the side of the left pillar of the main house. A table is placed next to the pillar. On it are laid 12 bowls of wine, 12 bowls of meat, and one bowl

/157 cont./

*782 777 731 of beeswax. The sorcerer-priest burns the wax, rings the hand bell, and utters an incantation, in general saying:

> "Recently the host has run into bad luck, frequently suffering losses. According to calculations, the Black Emperor Earth Lord or /158/ his descendants are seeking food. Therefore, today, I have been asked to offer sacrifice. Please eat the meat and drink the wine. You /plural/ are also promised a large bull. Please give your protection and bring about peace and safety."

[787] After the incantation, divination is performed with the chiao. The yang chiao indicates financial loss but immunity from disaster; the yin chiao means impending disaster without the loss of wealth; and the sheng chiao shows immunity from both. After the divination, paper is burned to send the kuei away.

(16) Handing Over the Ox

If after the sacrifice to the Black Emperor Earth Lord, one's luck is still bad, the only thing to do is to buy an ox and fulfill the vow, which in the Miao language is called [ʑio⁴ bu³ ȵie⁴]. Once this ox is offered to the kuei, it cannot be killed, nor can it be sold. It is allowed to die a natural death. The performance of this ritual is the same as that for Warming of the Ox Muzzle, except that the text of the incantation uttered by the sorcerer-priest is different, its general purport being:

> "The former vow being ineffective, luck still is bad. The host has saved money to go to market. At the market he looked around and saw a large bull, with big horns and a big body and handsome appearance. The host wanted it, and for a great deal of money he bought it and brought it home. Today has been selected as an auspicious day, and I have been asked to hand over the ox. I beseech the kuei to take it!"

After the incantation paper is burned to send off the Kuei,

755 outside the village, and its contents are strewn
753 on the ground. When the bowl is taken home and the sick person is not yet well, then a Mi-la is called in to drive away the hungry ghost by prayer.

789 (13) Drawing a Cat. Because of the destruction by rats in the house, the Miao-I often stick up a picture of a large cat on the wall to scare away the rats. They claim this device is very effective.

777 (14) The Auspicious Day. The Miao-I in the hsien district do not consult an almanac but consider as lucky any of the even days (2,4,6,8) in the lunar calendar as well as the ch'en and hsü days of the month. To ch'en belongs the dragon and to hsü, the dog, both of which do not have any taboo. So all the affairs of the Miao-I are conducted on either the even days or the dragon and dog days.

754 (15) Poisonous Insects and Medicines. It is said that in the Miao villages in An-shun certain women breed poisonous insects and certain men concoct medicines to harm people. Men and women who acquire these poisons - women by heredity and men through constant practice - are subject to frequent attacks themselves, ailing all over the body. So they have to eject their poisons to hurt others. Sometimes when they cannot harm human beings they can nevertheless damage woods and stones, for if their poisons are not ejected they themselves will be destroyed. This is a deep-rooted belief among the
754 Miao people. Each time an illness is prolonged
787 or becomes aggravated, the family suspects that the sick person has been affected by poisonous insects or medicines. In order to find out whether the sick person has acquired any poison, a test is made by placing at night a boiled egg on the breast of the sick person or beside his pillow. Next morning the egg is shelled and ex-

[11 cont.]

764 [177] On the third day comes "fa sang" [burial]. In former times the body was wrapped in a straw mat, but now it is laid in a coffin. This is the result of Chinese influence and practiced by those who live near the Chinese. At the time of burial, a small tree of about ten feet long is split in two, its bark peeled off and the two ends tied with ropes. The corpse is then placed on it and carried away on the shoulders. When the procession leaves the house the filial son walks in front, followed by the women mourners, whose long, show laments and plaintive cries are too sad to hear. Arriving at a mountain spot they dig the earth [12] to make a well, the four walls of which are lined with stone slabs. Into the well the coffin is lowered. If the body is wrapped in a straw mat, its two sides are left empty. On the top of the well more stone slabs are laid and then some earth. The tombs are all laid crosswise, hence the expression, "hêng Miao, tao Ch'i-lao [crosswise Miao and upside down Ch'i-lao]. After burial the guests all return to their respective homes.

766 777 [801] The Miao are superstitiously prejudiced against repeat figures in the age of the deceased, such as 22 or 33, believing that these figures would cause the dead to receive extra punishment in the spirit world and at the same time bring bad luck to the family. To overcome this mishap they jack up the coffin in some deep mountain, without letting it touch the earth on the theory that in so doing the spirit of the dead would not be admitted that year to the spirit world. In similar instances the Ch'ing Miao, whose dead is wrapped up in a straw mat, would hang the corpse high up on some lofty cliff in some wild area without letting it touch the earth to avoid damnation.

5. Culture

796 [771] 1) Religion. There is strictly no religion to speak of among the Miao-I in Kweichow. After living in the mountain village, they have come to respect the forest behind it, which they call [782] "hou lung" [back dragon] and once every spring they offer sacrifice to the mountain forest. After the sacrifice they

[23 cont.]

582 with the Chinese who live among them. Many of the Chinese speak the Miao language and are even influenced by the Miao in certain habits and customs, but intermarriages are extremely rare. Actually this is not only true of the Miao and the Chinese, but also of the different Miao groups. For instance at Chou-ch'i in the Lu-shan area there are 4,000 Short-skirt Hê Miao, about 200 to 300 Chinese, and less than 100 Mu-lao Miao. For marriage, these few Mu-lao Miao have to seek contacts in other Mu-lao villages very far away and never for a moment would they think of intermarrying the Short-skirt Hê Miao on the spot.

4. Funeral

764 When a Short-skirt Hê Miao dies his family decides on a [777] lucky day to invite three or four relatives to specially wail aloud for him. The corpse is placed on a temporary scaffold about five feet from the ground on the left side of the hall and covered with sheets of coarse native cloth of about six feet long and two feet wide. The married daughters as a rule each present a sheet. [24] The unmarried daughters at home also collectively present one, though in some rich families everyone gives a sheet. These different colored sheets are used to line the coffin at the time of interment. When the corpse is being moved out of the house, the family members all wear hemp cloth on their heads and weep aloud around the body. At the [202] same time they despatch messengers to announce the bereavement to relatives living far away. In case the deceased is a man, they fire hunting rifles at the gate, or in the case of a woman, firecrackers so that those relatives within earshot may be apprised. The little table in front of the corpse is complete with spirit tablet, incense and candles, four bowls of glutinous rice, twelve cups of wine, a pig's heart and stomach, and other offerings. A priest is engaged to "open the way." He wields a dagger and a bunch of straw, uttering magic words and brandishing, at the same time, the dagger and straw, in an effort to drive away evil spirits that may obstruct the way.

[180 cont.]

796 and then hang out knots of scented rice straw, but no red peppers. These decorations are in expectation of a prosperous year.

After having celebrated "The Big Year" on the thirtieth day of the twelfth month and having decorated the door on the New Year's day, the Hua Miao and the Ch'ing Miao would remain at home to rest without doing any work. The food for the New Year was prepared in advance on a lucky day (dragon and [777] dog days are lucky), and it is not cooked again until another lucky day comes around. [181] So on New Year's day there is no kitchen drudgery as only pre-cooked meals are eaten. The [784] New Year's day being the first of the year, everything has to be auspicious and inhibitions are many. For instance, 1) no sewing is done by women at home; 2) nothing is taken into the house from outside; 3) no water is carried; 4) no knife is used; 5) no one is allowed to go barefooted and shoes must be worn; 6) no cursing is allowed; 7) no rapping on the wall is allowed; 8) the floor must not be swept; 9) no collection of debt is permitted. Besides, there are the proverbial "three days of liberty" when [527] parents would allow their sons and daughters unrestrained freedom [593] in the pursuit of recreation and happiness on the first, second and third days of the year. After this period the children once more submit themselves to parental restraint. On the first day of the year the old and young are clothed in new garments and have fun all day long. Only the Hsiung and Yang families 769 among the Ch'ing Miao have the custom of worshipping ancestors 796 in the evening. At the time of the sacrifice, the head of the family would spread a straw mat on the floor of the middle room or the side room and place on it incense and candles as well as three bowls of rice. In each bowl is pitched a piece of pork on a bamboo stick with three straw knots to represent the ancestors. In addition there are three bowls of beancurd and three pieces of tz'u-pa [glutinous rice balls]. They call out aloud to ask their ancestors to pass the New Year with them. Then the male members of the family begin to kowtow in the order of their age. After the paper money is completely burned, they gather up the things on the straw mat. The rice straw and the bamboo

M [186 cont.]
796 tea. It is said that this tea, when drunk by old folks, can cure
[278] coughing. On this La-pa day the families cook the soft congee
M rice [chou], known as "la-pa-chou," instead of the hard, dry
[262] rice. This custom is the same as that of the local Chinese.

The last day of the twelfth month is the day to banish all
M bad luck, and is known as the "Big New Year Eve." On this day
●[777] all the Miao-I families do a thorough house-cleaning. They go to the mountain to collect bamboo branches and tie them in a bundle to be used as a broom to brush away the dust accumulated during the year. They also wash their household implements and utensils, and thus tidy up the whole house to give it a completely new look both inside and outside. In the morning they make tz'u-pa to feed the cow and buy from the village fair many varieties of New Year delicacies. In the evening they put wine and food outside the gate as offerings to heaven and earth and their ancestors. After the sacrifice they gather together for dinner in the house. They pick out some rice and meat from the table to feed the dog. After dinner the elder of the house distributes cash presents to the children. No one goes to bed on the New Year Eve as candles burn, firecrackers resound, and singing and music from the reed-organ rend the air the whole night until dawn. This is known as keeping the vigil of the year.

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[114] (This article was published in Shê-hui yen-chiu, No. 35, October 22, 1941.)

[190] The Drum Tower in the Tung-chia Area

Ch'en Kuo-chün

S
161 The southern border region of Kweichow province has a sub-tropical climate and food from nature is comparatively easy to obtain. There the life of the Miao-I people is easier and their physiological growth is faster than that in other Miao-I areas in Kweichow. For this reason the population in this district increases

/49 cont./

846 After the delivery the mother remains on her bed, and the husband cares for her in the same manner as at the end of her pregnancy. The husband tries to relieve her of all work. The length of the confinement depends on economic circumstances. [556] Among poor people it often lasts only a few days, among prosperous women it sometimes extends up to thirty days. In any case, among the Meau, it is prolonged as much as possible, since it is believed that the longer the confinement the healthier and stronger the woman will become and the more children she will therefore be able to bear.

I was unable to find any traces of the couvade among the Meau. On the other hand, Abadie (1) reported that the custom

1. Page 165.

occurs among some Meau tribes in China. He adds that in Tonkin this custom is not practiced, but that one could observe practices that seem to be derived from it. The author then mentions as such practices: "Vegetarian diet for the husband; a prohibition against his being absent or crossing the heights that form the boundary toward the neighboring valleys." Much more convincing is an illustration of the couvade given by Chang-Kong Chiu in his Kultur der Miao-tse (2) and the illustration in

2. Page 59.

the Album Gotha (3). In these cases, however, it is not en-

3. Reproduced in the Ostasiatischen Zeitschrift, 1916, p. 281.

tirely certain whether these illustrations actually refer to the Meau or perhaps to another Chinese mountain tribe.

845 The Meau are especially happy about the birth of twins and regard it as an omen of good luck. They even try to raise [977] weaklings, deformed children, and cripples. The hard struggle [732] for survival, however, almost always prevents their growing up.